

Washington Insider

APSA Participates in Social Science and Humanities Advocacy Days, Highlights NSF-Funded Research at Capitol Hill Exhibit

APSA took part in several events on Capitol Hill this spring to underscore the importance of funding for political science. In March, following the start of the FY 2017 appropriations process, APSA attended annual meetings and advocacy days sponsored by the Consortium of Social Science Associations (COSSA) and the National Humanities Alliance (NHA). APSA is a member of both organizations. The annual meetings provided an overview of recent legislative developments affecting federal funding for the social sciences and humanities and discussed how to carry out effective advocacy on Capitol Hill. The advocacy days provided the opportunity for political scientists and association representatives to visit congressional offices, discuss the importance of political science research, and express support for strong funding for the discipline, as appropriations committees prepared their bills for FY 2017.

The following month, APSA took part in an exhibition on Capitol Hill that highlighted research funded by the National Science Foundation (NSF). Organized by the Coalition for National Science Funding (CNSF), of which APSA is a member, the yearly event featured displays across the sciences that showcase NSF research. At this year's event, APSA hosted two political scientists who shared their NSF-funded project on modernizing political event data for big data social science research.

NHA ANNUAL MEETING AND ADVOCACY DAY

The National Humanities Alliance (NHA) is a coalition of more than 140 organizations that promotes research, education, public programs, and preservation in the humanities. Each year in March, scholars and representatives from coalition organizations gather in Washington, DC, for the NHA Annual Meeting and Humanities Advocacy Day.

This year's annual meeting, on March 14, featured speakers including William "Bro" Adams, chairman of the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH), David Marshall, NHA president and executive vice chancellor of the University of California, Santa Barbara, and Max Kenner, founder and executive director of the Bard Prison Initiative. In his opening remarks, Marshall discussed the Morrill Land-Grant Acts of 1862, which served as the foundation for land-grant colleges in the United States. He noted that higher education in the US was founded on the premise that technical and humanistic education ought to be complementary. Adams discussed the role of the NEH in bringing humanities and liberal arts into the public square and the NEH commitment to "growing the humanities ecosystem" through partnerships with humanities councils across the country. Kenner articulated the value of a liberal arts education for people in prison and the important role this education plays in helping reduce recidivism and in promoting social reintegration.

Two panel discussions also highlighted the importance of studying and researching the humanities. Panelists described a variety of ways that the humanities are important to communities, students, and businesses, noting that annual museum attendance far outstrips

attendance at major league sports events and theme parks combined; that students who double major in a STEM field and humanities discipline can see increased lifetime earnings; and that businesses consistently value ethics and the capacity for complex moral reasoning cultivated by humanities education.

The ideas and vocabulary developed over the course of these discussions proved immediately useful during visits to congressional offices the following day. Participants advocated funding for key humanities institutions and programs, including NEH, Title VI and Fulbright-Hays, the National Historical Publications and Records Commission, the Library of Congress, and the Institute of Museum and Library Services.

Advocates drew on themes from the annual meeting to explain to congressional staffers why humanities education and research benefits the body politic in ways that outstrip the funding levels currently in place. Although 2015 ended with a gain in funding for NEH for FY 2016, the organization has continued to operate under a curtailed budget in recent years. NHA advocates requested \$155 million for FY 2017, \$5 million above the president's budget request, to advance the organization's budget to earlier levels.

COSSA ANNUAL MEETING AND ADVOCACY DAY

COSSA advocates for sustainable federal support for social and behavioral science research. At a time when the value of social science has come under attack by some policymakers, COSSA works to communicate the value of social science and to advance robust federal investment in social science research.

At the COSSA Annual Meeting in Washington, DC, on March 15, panelists from a wide variety of backgrounds, including congressional staff, federal agency administrators, academic association professionals, and industry practitioners, shared their perspective about the importance of social and behavioral science research. Scholars whose research had been criticized in "wastebooks" issued by individual members of Congress reflected on their experience and shared best practices for communicating the value of federally funded social science research. Later, meeting attendees heard the perspective of three journalists on the importance of social science for the public.

In the afternoon, participants heard from Erica L. Groshen, the 14th Commissioner of Labor Statistics. Groshen spoke about the history and role of the Bureau of Labor Statistics, an independent federal agency charged with collecting an array of data about the economy. Next, a panel on "Social & Behavioral Sciences across Federal Agencies" featured remarks from Fay Lomax Cook, assistant director of NSF and head of the Social, Behavioral, and Economic Sciences Directorate (SBE), who spoke about the NSF's budget and cross-directorate initiatives at the foundation. Speakers from the National Institute of Justice, the National Institutes of Health, and the Environmental Protection Agency rounded out the panel. Lastly, in a panel called "Why Industry Needs Social Science," representatives from Google, Intel, and Facebook shared with the audience

the important role that social scientists can play in engineering products, designing marketing strategies, and analyzing data for a company or firm. Attendees also participated in advocacy training, learning strategies for effective meetings with congressional offices.

On March 16, APSA staff participated in the second annual COSSA Advocacy Day. Social science advocates from various disciplines visited a range of Capitol Hill offices to communicate the importance of social science and request increased funding for FY 2017. Meetings began by stressing the expansive role that social and behavioral science plays in our everyday lives, from improving election systems to reducing crime. Meetings also highlighted specific areas in which an office might have an interest in social science, and each meeting was tailored toward the district of the particular member of Congress.

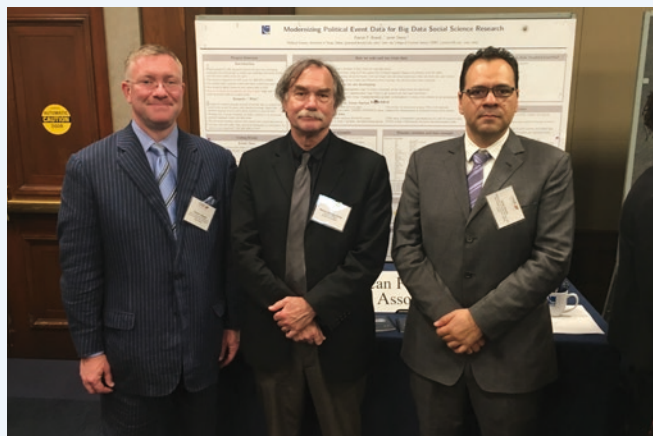
Overall, participants' appeal was for robust federal funding for social science in FY 2017 and beyond. As part of this request, advocates stressed the importance of strong funding for NSF that applies across all of its directorates. COSSA advocates also proposed specific topline appropriations figures for each federal agency that funds social and behavioral science, and offered to serve as a resource for congressional staff as the appropriations process continues.

CNSF EXHIBITION AND RECEPTION

On April 26, APSA participated in the Coalition for National Science Funding's 22nd Annual Exhibition and Reception in Washington, DC. The event, held in Rayburn House Office Building on Capitol Hill, featured research exhibits affiliated with 33 different organizations, from the American Astronomical Association to West Virginia University. The CNSF holds this event each year as a way to highlight the diverse array of research funded by the National Science Foundation and provide an opportunity for researchers to share their work with members of Congress, staffers, and other groups.

APSA hosted two political scientists at the event, Patrick Brandt (University of Texas at Dallas) and Javier Osorio (John Jay College of Criminal Justice, City University of New York), who are part of a research team using big data to develop a research platform for studying civil protest, civil unrest, and international conflict. Through a three-year NSF grant, the team of political scientists and computer scientists will code reports of conflict events worldwide, using reports in Spanish, Arabic, French, and English. The project informs data-driven decision-making connected to foreign policy, human rights, and prevention of civil war.

Attendees at the exhibition and reception included members of Congress, congressional staffers, government agency officials, and members of the academic community. Brandt and Osorio spoke with attendees about their research and the importance of NSF funding to their work. ■



Left to Right: Patrick Brandt (University of Texas at Dallas), Steven Rathgeb Smith (executive director, APSA), and Javier Osorio (John Jay College of Criminal Justice, City University of New York)

The Center Page

A LOOK AT THE CENTENNIAL CENTER FOR POLITICAL SCIENCE & PUBLIC AFFAIRS

VISITING SCHOLAR PROGRAM CALL FOR APPLICATIONS

The Centennial Center's Visiting Scholar Program assists scholars from the United States and abroad whose research and teaching would benefit from a stay in Washington, DC, and access to the resources available in the nation's capital. The Center can host scholars for short periods to extended periods of time, ranging from weeks to months.

Located within the association's headquarters near Dupont Circle, the Centennial Center offers visiting scholars newly refurbished shared work space, telephone, personal computers, Internet connectivity, conference space, and a reference library.

Visiting scholars are encouraged to contribute to the intellectual life of the association during their stay, including brown bag seminars to discuss their research.

Your membership with APSA must be active in order to qualify for the Visiting Scholar Program. Senior or junior faculty members, post-doctoral fellows, and advanced graduate students are all strongly encouraged to apply. Participants in the Visiting Scholar Program are not required to pay rent to the association during their stay.

Applications to the Visiting Scholar Program are accepted on a rolling basis. More information about the Visiting Scholar Program is available at www.apsanet.org/centennial/visiting.

CENTENNIAL CENTER RESEARCH GRANTS

The Centennial Center for Political Science and Public Affairs is providing more research assistance to APSA members than ever before. A grant from the Centennial Center's research grant program can be used to cover the costs of travel, interviews, access to archives, costs for a research assistant, or assistance in publishing research.

The typical Centennial Center grant for an individual scholar is between \$1,000 and \$2,500, but can reach a maximum size of \$10,000 for workshops, events, or projects in support of the profession.

Scholars at all professional levels with an active APSA membership are eligible to apply for a Centennial research grant. The Centennial Center will accept applications for the 2016–2017 grant cycle on three deadlines: December 1, 2016; March 1, 2017; and July 1, 2017. More information about Centennial Center research grants is available at www.apsanet.org/centennial/grants. ■